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US Bishops Approve New Catholic Lectionary Translation for Mass in 196-5 Vote

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"It is about consistency,"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

The nation's Roman Catholic bishops have approved updated versions of the Roman rite Mass lectionary and Book of the Gospels, with translations now matching those in the forthcoming Catholic American Bible. The favourable vote on 18 November 2026 - 196 in favour, five against and three abstaining - took place during the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' annual fall plenary assembly, held 16-19 November in Baltimore. The Catholic American Bible will replace the New American Bible Revised Edition (NABRE), released in March 2011, which has been the English translation of Scripture used in the readings at Masses; the new Bible will be available in 2027 through approved publishers.

Picture a Sunday morning in an American parish, a few years from now. The lector steps up to the ambo, opens the lectionary, and reads the first reading. The words will sound familiar - the same stories, the same psalms - but the phrasing will be slightly different, because the book in the lector's hands will be new. That is what 196 bishops voted for in Baltimore: not a new Bible for the shelf, but a new voice for the readings that millions of Catholics hear every Sunday.

The vote was decisive. One hundred and ninety-six bishops said yes, five said no, and three abstained - a margin that shows how much agreement there was in the room. The bishops were not voting on a whim. The lectionary is the book the church reads from at Mass, and changing its translation means changing the words that ordinary Catholics hear proclaimed, week after week, year after year. A decision like that is not taken lightly, and the size of the majority says the bishops believe the time has come.

At the heart of the change is a simple idea. "It is about consistency," said Auxiliary Bishop Michael G. Woost of Cleveland, chair of the bishops' Committee on Divine Worship: "we needed to bring those translations into the lectionary." Right now, the Bible Catholics read at home and the readings they hear at Mass come from different translations. The new Catholic American Bible will close that gap, so the words on the page at home and the words from the ambo on Sunday will finally match.

New Lectionary Translation: What Changes For American Catholics At Mass

The Catholic American Bible will replace the New American Bible Revised Edition, known as the NABRE, which has been in use since its release in March 2011. Fifteen years is a long time for a translation to serve the church, and the bishops' decision is, in part, a recognition that scholarship and language have moved on. The new Bible will be available in 2027 through approved publishers, and the lectionary that carries its translation will follow.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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